



Michael Schenker Group
In The Midst Of Beauty
Inakustik/MVD

German axe slinger Michael Schenker is a metal/rock guitar legend. From his earliest days with the Scorpions, to his heavy metal hey-day with UFO, through his lengthy solo career, the "Blonde Bomber" has consistently made his mark across the hard rock landscape.

With the release of *In The Midst Of Beauty*, Schenker reunites with four band mates from his original Michael Schenker Group (MSG) days with vocalist Gary Barden, drummer Simon Phillips and keyboard player Don Airey (plus bassist Neil Murray), widely regarded as his most renowned and respected solo lineup.

This is Schenker's first full studio release in over two years, so that - along with the fact that most of the original MSG line up has reunited - has got his fans sitting on the edge of their seats and for the most part, will not be disappointed. Schenker's last couple releases have been more an exercise in guitar prowess than a band structured atmosphere, however the addition of Airey's Deep Purple-esque style keyboards adds a refreshing dimension to the overall sound.

These melodic slabs of keyboards are evident on such tracks as the opening "City Lights", "I Want You" and especially "The One", which balances off nicely against the metal-edgy rockers like "Come Closer", "Nana" and "I Want You". However a couple other tracks that stand out to this old UFO fan include "End Of The Line", which features an old-school-driven Schenker riff and smoldering solo, and the change-up "Summerdays" in which Schenker offers some delicate acoustic guitar work reminiscent of the old UFO-acoustic numbers "Arbory Hill" and "Looking Out For #1".

Though *In The Midst Of Beauty* might not quite stand up to the early classic MSG such as Michael's 1980 debut or 1983's *Built To Destroy*, however bringing back old friends Barden, Phillips and Airey has created more atmosphere for which Schenker can feed off of. And although Barden might not be able to scream like he did back in the day, the veteran vocalist has adapted by creating a lower tone that remains strong. You can't completely turn back the clock, but this comes about as close as you can get.

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